

FACT SHEET 1

Australian Blood Cancer Registry

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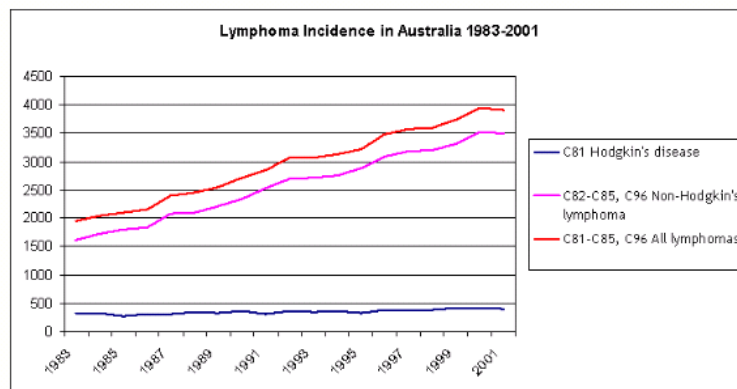
Blood Cancers in Australia

- "Blood cancers" are cancers of the blood forming organs and include cancers such as lymphoma, leukaemia and myeloma.
- Blood cancers are not rare. There are around 30,000 Australians with blood cancers and new cases of blood cancers are diagnosed at the rate of around 10,000 each year.

Cancer incidence in persons, Australia, 2003		
Cancer site/type (ICD-10 codes)	Number	% of total
Hodgkin lymphoma (C81)	430	0.5
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma (C82-C85, C96)	3,699	4.0
Immunoproliferative neoplasms (C88)	86	0.1
Myeloma (C90)	1,153	1.2
Lymphoid leukaemia (C91)	1,214	1.3
Myeloid leukaemia (C92-C94)	1,238	1.3
Leukaemia, unspecified (C95)	72	0.1
Polycythaemia rubra vera (D45)	326	0.3
Myelodysplastic syndromes (D46)	988	1.1
Other chronic myeloproliferative diseases (D47)	303	0.3
All Haematological cancers	9509	10.2
All cancers	93,194	100

(AIHW, 2007)

- When considered as a group, blood cancers are around as common as lung cancers. Almost the same number of Australians killed in car accidents each year are killed by lymphoma alone.
- There has been a problem with recognition of the significance of blood cancers because the data has been reported as separate diseases in national statistics where the solid tumours have been grouped according to organ.
- For the ten years between 1993 and 2003, leukaemia increased 23% and the incidence of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma increased 36% - the second largest increase after melanoma.
- Incidence rates for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma have doubled in twenty years without a cause being identified.



- Whilst there is a vast literature examining quality of life measures in patients with solid tumours, there is a paucity of data in this area for patients with the haematological malignancies.

Blood Cancers in Australia (cont)

- Blood cancers are a significant public health issue because they constitute a major proportion of the years of premature life lost from cancer
- Blood cancers are among the most expensive cancers to treat and the most costly for the individuals and families living with a cancer
- Causes are not well understood so strategies for prevention have not yet been identified
- Many of these diseases are potentially curable - survival rates depend on the delivery of customised therapy which varies with disease stage and other prognostic factors.
- Understanding of the molecular biology of these diseases is increasing rapidly leading to new and effective therapies
- These therapies are expensive and their optimum effectiveness and efficiency are not well understood for patients in the general community

